

1. to 63. (Canceled)

64. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus for printing an image on a printing medium employing an ink-jet printing head capable of ejecting ink supplied from an ink tank, comprising:

negative-pressure loading means which is able to introduce negative pressure into the ink tank;

ink-supplying means for supplying ink into the ink tank using the negative pressure in the ink tank;

gas-liquid separating means which lies in a negative-pressure loading passage between the ink tank and the negative-pressure loading means and which permits gas to pass but inhibits ink from passing; and

disrupting means capable of disrupting a midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage between the ink tank and the gas-liquid separating means.

65. (Canceled)

66. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the disrupting means has a connecting portion which releasably connects with the midcourse portion.

67. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, further comprising:

moving means for moving the ink tank, wherein the disrupting means connects the midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage when the ink tank is moved to a predetermined ink-supplying position, and disrupts the midcourse portion of the negative-pressure loading passage when the ink tank is moved away from the predetermined ink-supplying position.

68. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 67, wherein the moving means moves the ink-jet printing head together with the ink tank.

69. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is moved between a position for communicating with the inside of the ink tank and a position for never communicating with the inside of the ink tank.

70. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, further comprising:

wiping means for wiping the gas-liquid separating means.

71. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is a gas-permeable membrane comprising a tetrafluoride ethylene resin and a porous resin membrane material.

72. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the ink-jet printing head is provided with electrothermal-converting elements that generate thermal energies to eject ink.

73. to 76. (Canceled)

77. (Original) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is provided with a member made of a porous material with an oil repellent finish.

78. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 77, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is a gas-permeable membrane comprising a tetrafluoride ethylene resin, a polyolefin resin, and a porous resin membrane material which is subjected to the oil-repellent finish.

79. (Previously Presented) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in Claim 77, wherein the gas-liquid separating means is a gas-permeable membrane comprising porcelain, unglazed pottery, ceramic, and a porous material which is subjected to the oil-repellent finish.

80. to 125. (Canceled)